

particularly if all of you at the Embassy do what everybody tries to do at the White House every day and make sure I'm not my own worst enemy. [Laughter] I want to thank Bob Hunter for the work he's doing at NATO and say that this Partnership For Peace, contrary to what some have suggested, is not a weak limitation on the future of European security, it is a strong first step that opens the possibility of the best possible future for Europe in which everyone will have an opportunity to be a democracy and to be part of our shared security. And I want to say a special word of thanks to my longtime friend Stu Eizenstat for coming here to serve. We've worked hard to get this GATT agreement. The European Union is now a reality. We have to see it through; there's still a lot to do.

I stopped at a little coffee shop and restaurant on the way out here tonight, just talked to some citizens, and I met this incredible Belgian lady who said, "You're right, we've got to compete. We can't run away from the world." And she said, "I know how hard it is economically, but 2 years ago I didn't have a job, and now I have my own business and I'm doing very well, and I'm excited about the European Union. I'm going to do business in other countries now." We've got to somehow communicate that spirit, that belief that we can bring this economy back, this whole global economy back to people here so they can believe in themselves. I can tell you that, back home, that is beginning to happen. We do have more control over our economic destiny. The deficit is coming down after going up for 12 years. Jobs are being created, and movement is there in the economy. And there is a sense that we're beginning to confront problems that we have ignored for way, way too long.

So I think we're coming here at a very important time and an appropriate time. And I guess I ought to end by apologizing to those of you who have had to do so much extra work because of this trip and the headaches I may have caused you. But believe me, it is in a worthy cause, and we are going to make a new future for the people of Europe and the people of the world so that we don't repeat the mistakes of the 20th century in the 21st and so that we give all these children a better future than any generation has ever known.

Thank you very much.

[At this point, Antoenne Tixhon, Bourgmestre of Dinant, presented the President with a saxophone.]

The President. In case you didn't understand it, Dinant, Belgium, is the home of Adolphe Sax, the man who invented the saxophone. And this says, "Adolphe Sax, 1814 to 1894. To Bill Clinton, President of the United States." And it says something else, but my glasses are not here. [Laughter] "Dinant, Belgium" and—

Bourgmestre Tixhon. "International Year of the Saxophone."

The President. Yes, the international year of Adolphe Sax. And it points out that this wonderful horn was made in Paris by Selmer.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:03 p.m. at the Conrad Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Alan Blinken, U.S. Ambassador to Belgium; Robert Hunter, U.S. Ambassador to NATO; and Stuart Eizenstat, U.S. Ambassador to the European Union. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Exchange With Reporters in Brussels, Belgium January 9, 1994

Future Leaders of Europe

Q. Mr. President, how do you think your speech was received tonight?

The President. Oh, very well. I mean, you know, we consciously picked a very small room, and the Europeans are normally much more

polite when speeches are given like that. It was a serious speech. But a lot of the students came up to me afterwards and said that they were pleased to know that we were thinking about their future and that they found the ideas basi-

cally things they agreed with. I was very encouraged—

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us about the Ukraine?

The President. —and then after I got out into the crowd in the Place, there was much more sort of overt enthusiasm. And the Prime Minister and others were saying, “You know, that’s the way we are. We’re restrained in speeches, but these people are glad to see you. Look at the Place.”

Ukraine

Q. What can you tell us about the Ukraine, Mr. President? Are you close to an agreement, or do you have an agreement? Can Kravchuk sell it? Might we go to Kiev?

The President. All I can tell you tonight is that we worked very, very hard to bring the three of us together, and we’ve made a terrific amount of progress. And at least when I left to go to the speech I was not in a position to make an announcement.

Q. But you think it might be possible that this could happen and that Kravchuk could sell it?

The President. Well, I don’t want to—presumably, Mr. Kravchuk wouldn’t agree to anything he didn’t think he could sell. I think—I feel—I’m proud of the work that’s been done, and I appreciate very much the attitude that Kravchuk and Yeltsin have brought to this whole endeavor. But I don’t think I can say any more tonight. I don’t even want to—

Partnership For Peace

Q. Do you think Eastern European countries are going to be reassured by the Partnership For Peace?

The President. I hope so.

Q. [Inaudible]—giving Russia veto?

The President. I think they need to know this is not a question of veto power. But keep in mind there are certain responsibilities inherent in being in NATO, first of all, that NATO allies all remind each other of all the time. And what I said tonight I want to reemphasize. What I want to do is to leave open the possibility of creating the best possible future for Europe, where they all have the chance to be democracies, they all have a chance to be market economies, they all have a chance to respect one another’s securities and to support it and to do it in a way that also permits us to do the best we can if the best future is not open to us. That’s what the Partnership For Peace does. It’s not giving anybody a veto on future NATO membership.

Bosnia

Q. But what do you say to people who say that NATO isn’t relevant if it can’t guarantee the peace, let’s say, in Bosnia?

The President. Well, that was never the purpose of NATO. The purpose of NATO was to guarantee the peace and security of the countries that were member nations. And when the United States asked NATO to approve some actions in and around Bosnia, it was the first time we’d ever done anything out of the area of the NATO members themselves.

So we’re working on this. It’s not been established yet that anyone is capable of solving a civil war in another country. That’s not been established yet.

Q. [Inaudible]—air strikes will be discussed tomorrow, air strikes possible tomorrow?

The President. Good night, everybody.

NOTE: The exchange began at approximately 8:30 p.m. at the Au Vieux Saint Martin Restaurant. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.